

May 21, 1979

LB 262

passage of this bill. I have been involved in the organization of this matter within the last four days, and if this is the way it goes, I think it is going to go. I think it is going to pass. Then I think we're going to have to go to the referendum, and ladies and gentlemen, that has already...that particular organization has already started. If there are any other questions, I will be happy to answer. If not, Mr. Speaker, I think the amendment speaks for itself.

PRESIDENT: All right, the Chair recognizes Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Legislature, I think Senator Venditte's offering of the amendment has served the purpose he intended, which was to make an announcement that he is going to initiate a referendum on this issue. Now to deal with what we as a Legislature have a responsibility to do, I believe that his amendment should be rejected. It talks about putting the matter to a vote of the people, which is not what the bill considered when it was before the Judiciary Committee. It is not what the Legislature has voted in favor of twice. It is not the form of the bill which has been discussed with the Governor and others, even in the Attorney General's office. So I think this is not the time, as Senator DeCamp so aptly stated the other day, to run under the couch or wherever it was he said to run, and pretend to be doing something that is not really being done. Now Senator Venditte, I read the very lurid and I feel sensationalistic account given by the World Herald of the killing of a woman not too long ago in Omaha. But the thing I have to consider is why, when numerous black people have been killed in very vicious fashions, the World Herald has not described each individual stab wound, the careful cutting of the throat, and I'm talking about a specific case...the young lady's name was Rachael Pass. It is interesting to me that even in this morning's World Herald you see on the headline in column one, page one, Murderer Escapes From The Pen, yet in the morning edition of the Lincoln paper they point out that this guy had been captured. So I think it is clear what the World Herald's approach is, and I think it is designed to inflame the emotions of an uninformed public, but it ought not sway us from our responsibility as legislators. Remember this, the death penalty is in place on the books now. What has to be emphasized to the people is that the machinery of death cannot be made to go into operation and kill with dispatch

5475